

Bravest brothers by Jancys-Blue-Bayou

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Summary: Nancy, Jonathan and Will bonding over nightmares and a new revelation of Will's bravery.

Bravest brothers

A/N: Inspired by an issue of the comic book following Will's time in the Upside Down in season 1, which showed that when Jonathan saved Nancy from the Upside Down by pulling her back through the portal in the tree, unbeknownst to them Will was present on the other side and helped save Nancy by distracting the Demogorgon. Big thanks to kirabook/willel on Tumblr for sharing the comic with me.

"Jonathan... Jonathan help... Jonathan!"

The whimpering stirs him awake. Nancy is thrashing next to him in bed. The tears streaking her cheeks, the whimpering and thrashing instantly clues him into the fact that she's having a nightmare. The specific way she's thrashing and what she's whimpering even lets him know specifically which nightmare it is. Her most frequent one that recurs from time to time. It's gotten more infrequent, most nights she sleeps just fine. She's told him it was much worse before, before they got justice against the Lab. Before they got together. When they both spent their nights alone staring at the ceiling until finally falling asleep from sheer exhaustion. She told him she thought about calling him so many times those nights. He contemplated it too but didn't want to overstep any boundaries. Figured she had Steve to hopefully comfort her in case she like him couldn't get the events of that faithful November week out of her mind. She told him Steve tried in his own way but she never felt she could turn to him in the way she wanted, or needed.

They spend most nights together. Not only to get up to what they've discovered to be completely amazing, exploring each other's bodies and finding out what feels good, what makes the other feel amazing and be together as close as can be. They do plenty of that during day time too anyway. And not only because sleeping, actually sleeping, together is so nice. He's never slept better than with Nancy pressed up against him. But also because of reasons like this, for those nights when either of them still has nightmares. They can be there for each other in the way the other needs now.

"Nancy. Nancy I'm here. Nancy wake up. Nancy!"

He takes a gentle but firm grip of her shoulders to steady her and tells her the words he's discovered in the past works to snap her out of it, apparently the mere sound of his voice is comforting to her, she's told him. Her hands grab fistfuls of his shirt and she continues thrashing for a moment or two before she stirs awake.

"J-jonathan?"

She hiccups a little, catching her breath. Voice hoarse and she blinks away more tears before burying her face in his chest. He wraps his arms around her holding her close.

"I'm here, it's okay, it was just a dream Nance. Just a dream. You're okay, you're safe. I'm here."

The crying subsides and he lets her catch her breath, just rubbing circles on her back before whispering again.

"You okay?"

"Yeah," she answers in a small voice, nodding against his chest. "Sorry."

"Hey, don't be sorry. Remember?"

They're both apologetic to the other about their nightmares which finally led them to institute a rule that they shouldn't apologize for them since it's nothing to feel sorry about.

"Right."

"Was it the same?"

"Yeah... I couldn't find you at first... then I was in the tree but I was stuck... and that thing grabbed me... then I woke up."

"It's okay. You're safe. We're safe. That thing is dead. The gate is closed."

She nods again. He wipes away tears from her face with his thumbs.

"I love you."

"I love you too."

"You want anything? Water?"

Another nod.

"I'll get it for you, be right back."

She doesn't let go of him though. He sees her glancing at the clock on his nightstand. 4:47. She sighs heavily.

"I'm wide awake now. I don't think I'll get much sleep."

"Hey, it's okay. I'm here. We should try and get some. But first I'll get you water."

"I'll come with you. I need to stretch my legs."

"Okay."

He helps her out of bed and hand in hand they quietly sneak out of his room so to not wake his mom or Will on their way to the kitchen.

They see faint light coming from the kitchen but still jump a little seeing the small figure sitting by the table. Will is there, glass of milk and an X-Men comic in front of him.

"Oh."

They all just look at each other for a moment before he thinks to say something.

"What are you doing up?"

Will looks from him to Nancy. Will seeing Nancy here in the middle of the night isn't a big deal in and of itself, he knows Nancy stays over a lot. His mom caught wind of it quickly when they were still trying to be sneaky about it and said it was fine with her, that she'd rather have Nancy stay over than either of them sneaking in and out in the middle of the night, so Will knows about it too. But is a tad awkward for the three of them to run into each other at almost five in the morning.

"I couldn't sleep. Why are you up?"

He glances at Nancy, ready to make up a lie for her, but she has a soft expression on her face as she looks at Will and answers.

"I had a nightmare."

"I had one too," Will answers after a second.

They walk over to the table. He sits down, and Nancy sits down in his lap so he wraps his arms around her.

"Are you okay? You're sure it was just a nightmare, not...?" He tentatively asks his little brother.

"Yeah, it was a nightmare. It didn't feel like the... visions. It was different."

"Do you have nightmares often?" Nancy asks.

"I don't know. Sometimes. You?"

"Sometimes. What... did you dream about?" Nancy hesitates to ask the question.

Will doesn't answer, looks down at the table.

"For me it's the same way one almost every time," Nancy starts to talk about her own nightmare instead. Will looks up. "When we were in the woods looking for it, that thing, there was an opening in a tree trunk and I crawled through and suddenly I was there. In that place. And that thing was there. Feasting on some deer. And it sensed I was there. It chased me and I ran and I ran and I ran and I didn't know where I was or how to get out of there. I thought I was going to die. I screamed for Jonathan and I heard his voice. I followed it back to the tree. I got stuck but he pulled me back through. But in the dream... I get stuck and the monster... it gets me. Like I thought it would. I still don't understand how it didn't... it was so fast and I was stuck I don't get how it didn't get me then... I thought for sure it would..."

He draws her in closer as her tale goes on and he hears her get more anxious as the retelling goes on.

"It wouldn't have," Will says.

They both look up at Will in surprise after that statement.

"W-what?" Nancy asks, confused.

"It-it wouldn't have... I know. I... was there."

"You were there?" He asks, dumbfounded.

Will nods.

"I was hiding in the woods when I heard your voices. So I followed them. I heard your voice, and I saw you. And I saw the monster. I wanted to call out to you but I couldn't with it there. I saw the portal, and that you saw it but I knew you couldn't make it... the monster's too fast. So I picked up a rock and I threw it at a tree to distract the monster. So you'd have time to get away. And it took the bait, it went in the other direction, it went away from you, so you made it through. I tried to follow you but the portal closed before I could."

"You were there..." He repeats his words at the closure of Will's story. It shakes him. Will was right there. So close but so far away. He was *right there*.

"You saved me," Nancy says softly. Astonishment in her voice. The realization fully hits him now too. Will was there. Will helped him save Nancy. If not for Will, Nancy wouldn't be here in his arms right now. She'd be... there. He wouldn't have been able to save her alone. Will saved Nancy's life. He can't fathom his little brother's heroism, bravery and strength. It's already floored him so many times but it does again now. He can't believe how lucky he is to have all the bravest people in the whole world close to him, in fact under the same roof as him right now. "You two... you both saved me..." Nancy continues.

"Jonathan saved you," Will says.

"No," he protests.

"No you both did..." Nancy says. She slides out of his lap and steps over to Will and wraps him up in a hug. Will hesitates for a moment

then his arms circle around Nancy. "Thank you. You saved my life Will. You're so brave it's incredible."

"You are, Will," he reiterates. "Thank you."

"I don't know..." Will tries to bashfully deflect.

"You are," Nancy insists as she resettles herself in his lap. "You both are. Bravest brothers."

"Bravest monster hunter," he mumbles into her neck, pressing a kiss to her collarbone.

"I dreamt... I was here but not here... I mean, I was in that place... but here, and you were there, and you, and mom. But on the other side I mean... but there were no lights... I could see you but I couldn't talk to you... and the monster was there... and I tried to warn you, I tried to distract but I couldn't because I was stuck on my side... and it would get you all... you were running but it would catch you, it was just about to when I woke up. I couldn't do anything," Will recounts his nightmare. It sounds awful. Seeing and not being able to do anything to stop harm from coming to Nancy, his mom, his brother... that's his worst nightmare too.

"That's awful. But it's okay Will. It can't get us anymore. The gate's closed. It's over," he tries to comfort.

"And when it was for real you did everything. You saved me."

"And you saved mom."

"And the whole world really. You did that Will. Telling us to close the gate. You saved the world. Don't ever forget that."

"You saved me and mom," Will interjects.

"And me," he tacks on. Sometimes in his nightmares he can still feel the weight of the monster on top of him. Nancy's bullets had stopped it from killing him as he was laid out on the floor. "So we all saved each other. And I would do it again."

"Me too."

"Me too."

"We should remember that."

Nancy squeezes his hand and Will nods in agreement.